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OPERATIONS CENTER/CURRENT SUPPORT GROUP

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Item #2

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8,000 Cubans reportedly aid Nicaraguans

Washington (AP)—Cuba has sent an additional 2,000 military and civilian advisers into Nicaragua since early this year, according to recent U.S. intelligence estimates.

At the same time, officials said, Soviet deliveries of military equipment to Cuba this year have been running at about the same pace as in 1981, when the Soviets shipped a reported 66,000 tons to President Fidel Castro's forces. The 1981 total has been described as the biggest volume of such Soviet shipments to Cuba in nearly 20 years.

Intelligence sources, who asked not to be identified, provided updated figures as President Reagan prepared to leave today on a five-nation tour of Central and South America.

According to the most recent U.S. intelligence estimates, there are about 8,000 Cuban advisers working in Nicaragua, some 5,000 of them said to be civilians.

Last March, then-Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr., told a House Foreign Operations subcommittee there were about 6,000 Cubans in Nicaragua at that time.